

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-68 are pending. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-22, 67 and 68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 on the assertion that the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claims 45-66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 on the assertion that the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Claims 1 to 67 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for allegedly being anticipated by Caruso et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,848,271).

It is noted with appreciation that claim 68 is deemed allowable if rewritten in proper independent form. However, it is respectfully and earnestly submitted that the claims as substantively previously presented distinguish over the art of record.

SECTION 101 REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-22, 67 AND 68

As to the Section 101 rejection of independent claims 1, 13 and 67, these claims have been amended, without conceding the merits of the rejection, to recite a method of operating a computer device, the method in the computer device comprising the steps recited in the respective claims. For example, claim 1 recites “A method of operating a computer device to process a document in a workflow system, the method in the computer device comprising:” Independent claims 13 and 67 have been similarly amended. As amended, the method steps in these claims are now directed to a computer device. The recited method steps are directed to operations of the computer device. The Section 101 rejection of claims 1-22, 67, and 68 is believed to be overcome.

SECTION 101 REJECTION OF CLAIMS 45-66

As to the Section 101 rejection of independent claims 45 and 57, these claims have been amended, without conceding the merits of the rejection, to recite limitations directed to a “computer system.” These claims now explicitly define an apparatus, namely, a “computer system” operated in according the recited limitations. The Section 101 rejection of claims 45-66 is believed to be overcome.

SECTION 102 REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-67

The foregoing claim amendments were made solely to address the Section 101 rejections. It is expressly noted that no amendments have been made in response to the Section 102 rejection of the claims for the reason that it is earnestly believed the claims as substantively previously presented distinguish over the prior art. Reconsideration of the Section 102 rejection of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

A. Rejection of Claims 1-12

Independent claim 1 is directed to document processing in a first workflow network. When the document reaches a place in the first workflow that allows attachment of another workflow network, a check is performed to determine the document is permitted to attach to the first workflow a workflow network associated with the document. If so, then the attachment is made, and processing proceeds according to the attached workflow. Processing then continues with the first workflow. Claim 1 recites in part:

detecting when a document is at a place in a first workflow network that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document ...;

determining, when the document is at the place that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document, if a second workflow network specified by the document is permitted to be attached ...; and

if the second workflow network ... is permitted to be attached [then] attaching the second workflow network to the place of the first workflow network such that the document is processed according to the second workflow network before returning ... to the place of the first workflow network to continue processing of the document according to the first workflow network

1. “detecting when a document is at a place in a first workflow network”

The examiner cited Caruso at column 11, lines 7-20, referring to the processing shown in Fig. 2, for allegedly teaching the recited “detecting” step:

detecting when a document is at a place in a first workflow network that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document ...

A review of the description of Fig. 2 shows that an activity 210 is performed when a user enters data associated with the activity. *Col. 10, lines 60-63*. Examples of activities

are shown in 300 (Fig. 3, column 10, lines 20-28). Caruso teaches in Fig. 2 that after the data relating to activity 210 has been saved and the user indicates that the activity 210 has been completed, the system triggers the event(s) 220 associated with the activity 210. *Col. 11, lines 3-6*. An example of an activity given by Caruso is shown in Fig. 4, relating to class registration in an educational facility. Fig. 5 shows three events identified when a user has selected class registration including adding a class, deleting a class, or changing a class. Each event may be chosen for execution by the user. *Col. 11, lines 17-21*.

There is no description in column 11, lines 7-20 of Caruso relating to detecting when a document is in a place in a workflow network that allows attachment of workflow networks. There is no description of workflow networks being associated with the document. While the act of detecting may constitute the occurrence of an event (i.e., detection), that is the only commonality with Caruso's triggering of an event (e.g., selection of the 'class registration' activity). A user's selection and completion of an activity such as 'class registration' in no way relates to a document reaching a place in a workflow network that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document.

A more general review of Caruso has been made to more fully respond to the rejection. The Summary Section in Caruso provides a discussion about documents. As best understood from reviewing the discussion beginning at column 3, line 30, Caruso appears to describe event-driven processing of documents in a workflow. However, there is no teaching wherein a document is detected in a place in a first workflow network that allows for attachment of a workflow network. There is no teaching that a document is associated with a workflow network that can be attached to the first workflow network.

Caruso therefore does not teach, or even suggest, "detecting when a document is at a place in a first workflow network that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document," as recited in claim 1. For at least this reason, the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-12 is believed to be overcome since not every limitation recited in the claim is taught by Caruso.

2. “determining ... if a second workflow network ... is permitted to be attached”

The examiner cited Caruso at column 11, lines 45-55, referring to the To Do list shown in Fig. 2, for allegedly teaching the recited “determining” step:

determining, when the document is at the place that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document, if a second workflow network specified by the document is permitted to be attached ...

A further review of Caruso’s description of Fig. 2 shows that when an event 220 is chosen, a stored procedure makes a determination of all possible next steps 230 which are associated with that event 220 and then determines which next steps 230 are to be chosen. *Col. 11, lines 22-28*. Based on the information contained in the chosen next steps 230, a message indicating the next activity/task to be performed is sent to a To Do List 240 of the user or users responsible for performing the next activity/task. *Col. 11, lines 45-50*.

Caruso does not teach determining, when the document is in the allowable place in the first workflow network, if a second workflow network is permitted to be attached to the first workflow network. For example, Caruso’s To Do List 240 does not involve the notion of permission. As understood, next activity/task information relating to the next steps of a selected event is sent to the To Do List of users responsible for performing the next activity/task based on the chosen next steps 230. The next activity/task is not determined based on permissions.

Caruso does not teach that a second workflow network is associated with a document. Caruso’s To Do List is a list that is associated with the user(s) who will perform the next activity/task; it is not associated with a document. The next activity/task is determined based on a next step that is chosen by the user; it is not associated with a document.

Caruso therefore does not teach or even suggest “determining, when the document is at the place that allows attachment of workflow networks associated with the document, if a second workflow network specified by the document is permitted to be attached,” as recited in claim 1. For at least this reason, the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-12 is believed to be overcome since not every limitation recited in the claim is taught by Caruso.

3. “attaching the second workflow network to the place of the first workflow network ... the document is processed according to the second workflow network before returning”

The examiner cited Caruso at column 11, lines 7-20 and column 12, lines 47-55, for allegedly teaching the recited “attaching” step:

if the second workflow network ... is permitted to be attached [then] attaching the second workflow network to the place of the first workflow network such that the document is processed according to the second workflow network before returning ... to the place of the first workflow network to continue processing of the document according to the first workflow network

a) “attaching the second workflow network”

As discussed above, column 11, lines 7-20 describes the completion of an activity which then triggers the event(s) associated with the activity; e.g., activity is class registration, and upon completing the registration process, three events are triggered - add, delete, change class. There is no discussion relating to attaching a second workflow network to a place in a first workflow network. There is no discussion that the attachment is made if the second workflow network is permitted to be attached.

Column 12, lines 47-55 is part of a discussion of another example of Caruso’s information flow processing. The example relates to the activity of adding a new part to a system for controlling a manufacturing operation. The specific citation describes a “Part” activity in order to create a new part. In response to a user choosing this activity, a “Part” activity screen is presented, allowing the user to enter a part number. The discussion then goes on to describe that when the part selection activity is completed, the system triggers execution of one of the events; e.g., “Create new part.” *Col. 12, lines 56-60.*

As this additional example is simply another example, Caruso has not taught attaching a second workflow network to a place in a first workflow network. Caruso has not taught that the attachment is performed if the second workflow network is permitted to be attached.

Caruso does not teach or suggest “if the second workflow network ... is permitted to be attached [then] attaching the second workflow network to the place of the first workflow

network,” as recited in claim 1. For at least this reason, the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-12 is believed to be overcome since not every limitation recited in the claim is taught by Caruso.

b) “the document is processed according to the second workflow network before returning”

A particularly distinctive limitation in the attaching step is:

the document is [then] processed according to the [attached] second workflow network before returning ... to the place of the first workflow network to continue processing of the document according to the first workflow network.

In other words, when the second workflow network is attached, the document is processed according to the second workflow network. Upon completion of the second workflow network, processing of the document continues in the first workflow network at the point where the second workflow network was attached. Loosely speaking, the second workflow network represents a temporary detour from the first workflow network.

Caruso clearly does not teach this aspect of the present invention. For example, Caruso’s To Do List simply sets forth the next activity/task. There is no deviation from a first workflow network followed by resumption of processing in the first workflow network.

Caruso therefore does not teach or suggest “that the document is processed according to the second workflow network before returning ... to the place of the first workflow network to continue processing of the document according to the first workflow network,” as recited in claim 1. For at least this reason, the Section 102 rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-12 is believed to be overcome since not every limitation recited in the claim is taught by Caruso.

B. Rejection of Claims 13-67

The examiner rejected claims 13-67 on the ground that these claims “list all the same elements of claims 1-12. Therefore, the supporting rationale of the rejection to claims 1-12 applies equally as well to claims 13-67.” *Office action, page 8*. Accordingly, the Section 102

rejection of claims 13-67 is believed to be overcome for the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1-12.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

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